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Doctor Says One Bullet Hit JFK and Connally

By BRIAN BOYER

CHICAGO—Could one bullet actually have struck both President Kennedy and Texas Gov. Connally?

Critics of the Warren Commission's report on the assassination have argued long and loud that it wasn't possible, but a Columbia University surgeon says he has new evidence that supports the commission right down the line.

His name is Dr. John K. Lattimer, and although his specialty is urology, he documented his own experimental data on the assassination bullets that rebuts some of the theories of the commission's detractors.

Speaking before 150 persons in the International College of Surgeons' Museum and Hall of Fame here, the tall, thin, professor and chairman of the department of urology at Columbia's medical school said the bullet found on Connally's stretcher was, in fact, deformed.

Opponents of the Commission's report have argued that it wasn't.

A Similar Deformity

Furthermore, he said, experimental tests with similar bullets have deformed them in in similar ways and conclusively account for the missing 2.1 grains of lead in the projectile.

By Lattimer's account, accused assassin Lee Harvey Oswald's second shot (the first, he maintains, hit a tree branch and never reached the President's car), struck the back of President Kennedy's neck, went through his voice box and "came out at the knot of his tie."

Although it was slowed down, he said, this "very powerful bullet" then passed through Gov. Connally's chest, turned sideways through his wrist and lodged "backwards in his leg."

The bullet was flattened on one side, not unmarked as critics have maintained, he said, and missing 2.1 grains of lead from the bottom.

"We undertook to deform similar bullets in the same way," he said. "What happens is that soft lead squeezes out of the brass cover to the amount of 2.2 grains."

X-rays of Connally's wrist show small pieces of lead from the bullet that struck him.

600 Rounds Fired

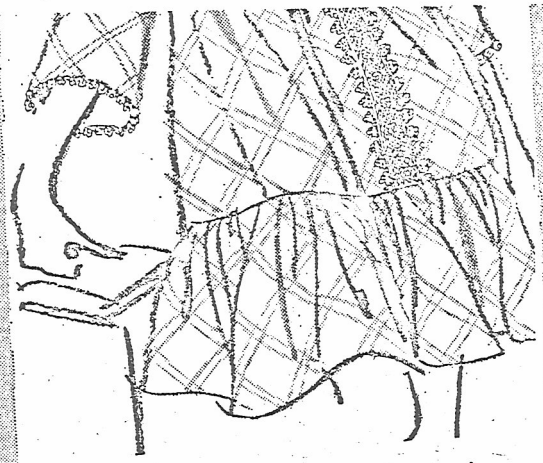
He supported his contention that the bullet was powerful enough to do all he claimed, by stating that similar Carcano carbine ammunition penetrated four feet of wood and could easily pass through four—not just two—persons.

Arguments have been offered that the ammunition was not reliable, but Lattimer maintained that "over 600 rounds of th [ammunition] used by Oswal were fired . . . with not a singl failure to fire."

The bullet that killed Kenned was the third one fired the da of the assassination, he said. entered the back of the Pres dent's head and destroyed th right half of his brain when exited at the front of the head

The gun, which some hav maintained is not accura enough to account for the on assassin theory, is indeed a curate, he said, adding:

"At 263 feet [the distance b tween the Book Deposito window and the Presiden car], I placed three bullets a target head in 6½ secon It's perfectly easy to do, ev for an amateur."



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Did Fate Step In?

Even if Oswald had not been a good shot, fate helped him, the surgeon implied.

The telescope on the gun was affixed in such a way that it lined the shot upwards and to the right, and "unfortunately for the President, his car at that moment was turned a bit to the right and going up," Lattimer said.

"If it hadn't been mis-sighted in this way, the last bullet would have hit Mrs. Kennedy's head," he said.

He added that the lack of bullet wounds from a "lateral direction" helped rule out a conspiracy theory, at least in the act of the murder itself.

Lattimer's theories probably won't end the arguments that have gone on for five years since President Kennedy's death, but they do add support to those who say that the Warren Commission reached the proper conclusion.

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